10. Lands for War Service men.—It is a matter for regret that greater progress has not been made in the assignment of lands to Travancore's ex-soldiers of the Indian Army. The Government have exempted their applications for lands from payment of court fees. Officers of the Revenue Department have been instructed to restore to the file applications from War service men struck off on the technical ground that court fees had not been paid and to make special efforts to assign to them, as much as possible, out of the area of 3,799 acres earmarked for them.

11. Land Laws.—The committee appointed to examine the revised Puduval Rules generally and those relating to the assignment of town lands in particular has completed its deliberations and its report has just reached the Government. The rules relating to land records maintenance, which have been the subject of adverse criticism and which were examined in detail by the Land Records Committee, have been revised and a new set of rules was issued under date the 31st December, 1926. To facilitate the work of the Land Colonisation Committees, Tahsildars have been nominated to the committees as Member and President in the place of Dewan Peishkars, whose multifarious duties render it difficult for them to move with the committees for the selection of lands.

12. Co-operative Growing of Tea.—Some of you gentlemen who have paid me the compliment of a visit have urged me to make a pronouncement on the subject of what is now known as the Brooke Bond concession. It is just and reasonable that the people of the country should want to know all about this matter. The large body of European interests, both companies and individual planters, who have done so much to open up the previously neglected uplands and jungles of the State, blazed a trail which our people failed to follow for half a century or more. It seemed to me that there is a class of people in the State who need but to be given a lead and a helping hand to enter into these new fields in the good company of worthy and friendly men of enterprise from beyond our borders. The class I am thinking of commands little capital. Safe co-operation between the experienced English capitalist and the untrained man of Travancore; whereby both may work for the commonweal as well as for individual advantage, was the ideal I had in view. A scheme of give and take was drawn up, generous in the giving. It impressed me as of striking originality, and as on lines hitherto unknown in India. With effective safeguards, imposed by legislation, if necessary, the plan should offer a new and attractive avenue for profitable employment to a growing number of intelligent young men of the middle classes who now languish from unsatisfiable yearnings for salaried service. Before I was ready with adequate data, the question of this scheme came up before the Legislative Council. There was nothing mysterious about it. The only reason why it was not made public there before was the confidential respect which the honourable observances of business require at the preliminary stages of propositions involving large competitive financial interests. I had, however, without divulging names, consulted various responsible persons of the non-official world here with regard to it. In confidence too, the matter was placed before the Economic Development Board ; and when it appeared that certain members of the Council feared there was something sinister afoot, I told the Council in plain terms all that there was to say. You may read what I said at the Council meeting. A copy of my speech there is today supplied to each of you. Since then, nothing further has transpired beyond the issue of orders for a small party of surveyors, accompanied by an expert in tea lands and soils, to explore and sort out lands in an unpopulated and unsurveyed tract, far up in the mountain fastnesses of our hinterland. What happens next will depend upon what they report ; and after that, the final verdict will lie with the representatives of the people.

13. Forests.—Our department of woods and forests has been doing well, both in matters of immediate utilitarian value and in looking far into the future. Our people demand the yielding up of forests. The department is a jealous custodian. Wherever possible, endeavour must be made to ease the density of population in our occupied lands and for such better distribution the policy of judicious disafforestation already initiated will be carefully pursued.

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